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C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 003062

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [ELAB](#) [BL](#)  
SUBJECT: CLONE WARS: MAS "PARALLELISM" IN ACTION

REF: LA PAZ 2104

Classified By: EcoPol Counselor Mike Hammer reasons 1.4b,d

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Summary  
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¶1. (C) At many levels of social organization, Bolivia's ruling Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) party is creating parallel organizations when confronted by civic groups that will not fall in line with the MAS agenda. By creating parallel organizations and then acting as if they are the original or only organization of that name, the MAS is artificially bolstering its apparent level of civic support. Members of non-MAS, original organizations also tell us that their clones receive Venezuelan and NGO aid while the non-MAS groups are left out or even actively attacked. The growing number of MAS "clones" is causing frustration for original, non-MAS organizations and confusion for foreign donors (those few who are aware of the situation). End summary.

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Duplicating Hugo's Cloning Concept  
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¶2. (C) Those familiar with recent Venezuelan history will see parallels to the MAS policy of cloning uncooperative civic groups. For example, when faced with opposition in the form of Venezuela's oldest labor union, the Confederation of Venezuelan Workers (CTV) headed by Manuel Cova, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez created a new union, the National Union of Venezuelan Workers (UNT). Reportedly the International Labor Organization (ILO) was then lobbied strongly by each group, as both CTV and UNT sought recognition from the UN's international labor body. In 2006 the ILO ruled in favor of CTV in a complaint against numerous actions of the Venezuelan government (available at [www.oit.org.pe/sindi/english/casos/ven/ven200\\_601.html](http://www.oit.org.pe/sindi/english/casos/ven/ven200_601.html)) but within Venezuela the organizations discredited each other with dueling claims of legitimacy.

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The Student Has Surpassed the Teacher...

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13. (C) Bolivian President Evo Morales has taken Hugo Chavez's example and expanded upon it. Any group that does not conform with MAS goals risks being cloned. A prime example is the Syndicated Confederation of Campesino (small farmer) Workers of Bolivia (CSUTCB), a group which, traditionally, would have been assumed to be firmly in the MAS camp. Differences between the CSUTCB leadership and the MAS led to a split, however, soon followed by the appearance of a new CSUTCB with different leadership (Note: the head of the original CSUTCB, Rufo Calle, will be an International Visitor to the United States in January and February of 2008. End note.) The official state news service now refers to the cloned CSUTCB and its leader, Isaac Avalos, as "the CSUTCB" with no mention of the fact that there is another, pre-dating version of the group. Because of the hierarchical organization of civic groups such as the CSUTCB, the MAS has also had to clone departmental (or state-level) CSUTCBs as well. As a result, each department now has an original CSUTCB which still reports to Rufo Calle and the original national CSUTCB while also having a cloned departmental CSUTCB that reports to Isaac Avalos. Rufo Calle informs us that his members and associate organizations have been harassed by the MAS. Possibly more damaging, even the independent press now quotes the head of the cloned MAS CSUTCB, with no mention of the original organization.

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Send in the Clones  
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14. (C) Other cloned groups include the national and departmental levels of the "Bartolina Sisa" Confederation of Campesino Women and a number of local neighborhood committees (FEJUVEs) and departmental civic committees. In certain cases (such as the attempt to clone the Santa Cruz Civic Committee) the original is either prominent or powerful enough to resist replacement, and the MAS clone hovers in the background almost unrecognized. In Santa Cruz, the local power structure has also rejected MAS attempts at cloning civic and neighborhood committees, and while our contacts inform us that the MAS is still trying to set up parallel or competing organizations, the attempts are thus far unsuccessful. But in other cases, the MAS clones are cited in the media and referred to in legal documents, so that an outside observer might not even be aware of the existence of the original.

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Cobija: Complaints and Clones  
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15. (C) In Cobija, the departmental capital of Pando, emboffs had an enlightening meeting with Ana Melena de Suzuki, the president of the original Civic Committee of Pando. Melena, an accountant in her first public position, explained that the MAS clone of her organization worked with other MAS clones or with MAS-aligned original organizations such as the Campesinos' Federation. Melena claimed that although the leadership of the Campesinos' Federation was aligned with MAS, some of its membership still worked with Melena's original Civic Committee. Because the local Neighborhood Association (FEJUVE) had not tied itself to MAS, the Civic Committee and the FEJUVE were still affiliated. In a later meeting with the president of the original FEJUVE, emboffs learned that the FEJUVE has also been cloned, and that while the original FEJUVE attempts to maintain ties to the FEJUVEs at a national level, they have been to some extent pushed aside by the MAS-aligned clone. The president of the original FEJUVE, Eduardo Segundo Miyashiro Mercado, stated that the local Vigilance Committee (an anti-corruption group) has also been cloned. Because the mayor of Cobija is aligned with the MAS, the mayor's office will not work with either the original Civic Committee or the original FEJUVE.

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The Tears of a Clone

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¶6. (C) All representatives of original organizations with whom we have spoken have complained about the diversion of international support to their clones. According to Melena and Miyashiro in Cobiya, their organizations' clones have received support from NGOs and in the form of Venezuelan checks, while the original organizations are ignored. In the case of Venezuelan checks or other Bolivian government (that is, MAS) support, the diversion of funds is clearly intentional.

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Eenie, Meanie, Miney...MAS  
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¶7. (C) In the case of NGOs, particularly newly-arrived NGOs, the preferential support of cloned organizations may be intentional (many NGOs are quite supportive of the MAS) or it may be a result of ignorance or confusion. For example, an NGO arriving recently with the worthy goal of supporting indigenous groups could easily be directed to a cloned campesino or neighborhood organization, with no knowledge that this organization is a MAS-created puppet. Thus, MAS-created clones not only receive public recognition (a type of currency in its own right), they are likely to receive financial support that may have been intended for the original organization that the clone replaced.

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Invasion of the Name Snatchers  
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¶8. (C) Comment: In the end, does it really matter? The original organizations are only psuedo-democratic and sometimes questionably-responsive to the constituents they claim to represent. Who cares if the 'CSUTCB' quoted in the press is really CSUTCB 2.0, the MAS-clone? Beyond the question of state-interference and strong-arm tactics, there is another reason to care about the MAS cloning program: Evo bases much of his international reputation on his popular support. When he claims to have the support of the CSUTCB, or campesino women's groups, or neighborhood or civic committees, much of Bolivia (let alone the world) is not aware that he created many of these groups himself. As the president of the original (and now sidelined) Cobiya FEJUVE stated, "Evo claims to rule for all the people, but he doesn't." And those people who object to Evo's rule may find themselves sidelined by their own clones. End comment.  
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